EQUALITY COLORADO

The EQUAL Times

The Newsletter of Equality Colorado

Spring '97 Vol. 5, No. 2

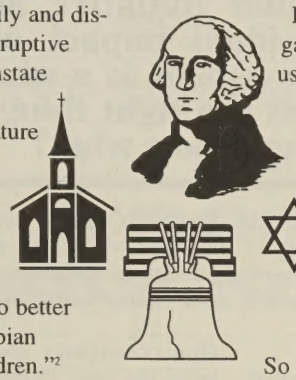
PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203 • (303) 839-5540 • (303) 839-1361 fax • equalityco@aol.com

Cover Story

Mixing Religion & Politics

How far can the Radical Right go in bringing the Bible to the lawbooks?

The Christian Action Network is mobilizing its constituents to urge Governor Romer to recriminalize sodomy in Colorado in order "to encourage the traditional family and discourage acts and practices disruptive of that tradition." And to reinstate Amendment 2.[1]



Focus on the Family literature advocates a ban on lesbians attaining artificial insemination because "millennia of moral teaching and experiential wisdom should not be ignorantly thrown aside for no better reason than the desires of lesbian women to bear and raise children."[2]

Colorado for Family Values orchestrated a campaign to restrict what the Palmer High School student newspaper could write about after a student wrote an article about gay students and their lives. The policy CFV proposed would force the school to promote only abstinence and "traditional marriage."

In their efforts to restrict basic freedoms for gay people, the Radical Right has resorted to using code words. "Tradition," "millennia of teaching," etc. are used instead of "God says" or "It's in the Bible" because they recognize that Americans are very skittish about the intersection of religion and politics. Yet these organizations are clearly driven by an underlying belief system that draws directly from their religious teachings.

So they've developed more sophisticated rhetoric. But as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people know, the specific mix of religion and politics that's behind their agenda represents a serious threat to a free and plural society.

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Upcoming Events

FRIDAY, MAY 2 • 6-9 PM

• MEXICAN FIESTA •

to benefit Equality Colorado • $25 in advance

Los Pericos Mexican Restaurant • 500 W. Colfax Ave, Denver

RSVP by phone: (303) 320-1114

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 • 6-8 PM

• WINE TASTING •

to benefit Equality Colorado's Anti-Violence Project • $15

The Grand • 538 E. 17th Ave, Denver

call AVP at (303) 839-5540 for more information

SATURDAY, JUNE 28 • 2-5 PM

• JUNE WEDDING •

University of Denver, Park Hill campus

Whatley Chapel • 2600 Leyden St. • Denver

For the second "straight" year, Equality Colorado's Marriage Rights Project is sponsoring a mass same-sex wedding. For more information, see p. 4 inside or call (303) 839-5540.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29

• DENVER PRIDEFEST •

Be a part of Equality Colorado's float!

sponsored by GLBCSCC

For more information call us at (303) 839-5540.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3 • 7:30 AM

• DRIVE *FORE* EQUALITY •

A Golf Tournament to benefit Equality Colorado and NGLTF.

7:30 a.m. shotgun start • Call (303) 839-5540 to learn more

INSIDE!

See Voices Of Faith's SPECIAL INSERT

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Listening to Voices

Equality Colorado formed Voices of Faith in 1994 in order to create a statewide interfaith coalition of people and faith communities working together for full equality and inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Over the years, the work has taken the form of popular workshops on Biblical Self-Defense and Pastoral Care for the GLBT communities; working with clergy to increase the call for justice; the annual conference *Claiming the Spirit*; to name only a few areas in which we work.

This issue's *Equal Times* includes a four-page Voices of Faith insert. We hope you enjoy it and encourage you to become more involved with this vital program.

Legislature '97

Employment Equality: Our Next Steps

By Representative Gloria Leyba

This legislative session I had the great honor of sponsoring a bill that would have prohibited the practice of basing employment decisions on sexual orientation. This was the first time such a bill had been introduced in over 20 years, when then-Representative Wellington Webb sponsored a bill that would have included gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in Colorado's existing civil rights statutes.

Our bill, HB 97-1266, was assigned to the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee, which has eight Republicans and five Democrats. The testimony we offered was compelling -- we heard many stories of anti-gay job discrimination, while civil rights advocates from diverse communities sat in front of the committee and proclaimed that gay rights are indeed human rights. And the committee members listened, and were educated.

Unfortunately, we fell one vote short. Only one of the Republicans, committee chair Paul Schauer, voted in favor of HB 1266. This was disappointing, but far from unexpected. Other states have had to introduce similar bills for years before gaining enough momentum to win final passage. And only a handful of states actually do offer protection from sexual orientation in all parts of the state. Federal protection has been sought for more than two decades, and has not yet been achieved. So we're not alone in the struggle by any means.

Outstanding testimony and an excellent effort by the Equality Lobby did not convince a winning majority of the General Assembly members to support employment non-discrimination. Your state representatives and state

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Board Games by Joanna Dueñas

Being a Queer Activist Means Never Having to Say, "I Should've, I Could've"

"If there is no struggle, there can be no progress...find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them."
-- Frederick Douglass

MANY THANKS TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU who have, to paraphrase Frederick Douglass, "refused to quietly submit to injustice," wherever you see it happening in our world today. We are witnesses to injustice every day. And as long as we lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender peoples allow religious and political extremists to unleash their rhetoric of hate against us and others in our communities (i.e., people of color, women and children, immigrants, the poor and disenfranchised), then we have colluded in exacting the same measure of injustice that will be imposed against us.

Most recently so much of our collective energies and resources as a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community have been directed towards fighting the unjust and immoral Amendment 2 ballot initiative and its residual impact on our movement as a whole. It was the right thing to do then. Now what?

Like myself, many Queer activists matured during the Amendment 2 battle. Some were already involved in pre-Amendment 2 organizing efforts in our community, and others came into the picture as a result of the AIDS epidemic. Amendment 2 forced us to take a long hard look at who our friends were and where we fit into the overall civil rights movement. We organized, pooled our resources, and founded many organizations and projects to educate our families and friends. Equality Colorado was one such organization that formally incorporated in January of 1993. This last January, Equality celebrated its fourth full year of operation in this climate of change and continued hostility towards our community.

We fought the unjust and immoral Amendment 2 ballot initiative and its residual impact on our movement as a whole. It was the right thing to do then. Now what?

THE CONCEPT FOR EQUALITY COLORADO came about as a result of a handful of les/bi/gay community activists who saw the need for a permanent organization that would be dedicated to educating, organizing and mobilizing around lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues throughout the state of Colorado, not just in the metro Denver area. Those Queer activists looked beyond the current hostile political climate towards creating a positive climate for our community. The work continues *after* Amendment 2. And there is plenty of it.

In the legislative arena alone, Equality has been there to do battle and be witness to mean-spirited challenges to our right to marry, our inclusion in hate crimes and statewide civil rights law, and our right to have equal benefits in the workplace. In our everyday lives, Equality Colorado partners with those of us who are and are not "out" in our struggle to tell the truth about our lives, to debunk the negative stereotypes and acknowledge and respect the diversity of our community. We travel the four corners of this state to find community and to learn from our brothers and sisters in rural and western slope towns just what issues are facing them in their respective communities away from the maddening halls of the state legislature and our "in-town" politics.

We travel the four corners of this state to find community and to learn from our brothers and sisters in rural and western slope towns just what issues are facing them.

Equality Colorado is truly about grassroots organizing. The work is here, the need for resources is now. Four years and hundreds of volunteer and staff hours later, Equality Colorado continues its mission of working for civil rights for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the state of Colorado. A tall order for so young an organization.

OUR COMMUNITY KNOWS OPPRESSION. It may not have the long history that other oppressed and marginalized peoples have experienced and know, but oppression is oppression. We need to be aware of it, be willing to call it what it is, and we need to have the courage to undo it just as we worked to "Undo 2."

There is no mystery, no magic to doing this work...this work we fondly call "Queer activism." It's about every one of us lining up to do our share, take our turn and work off our debt to those who have made it possible for us to be here having this public dialogue. It is about becoming an agent for social change. Giving a damn is a good first step. There is no place for should've and could've in civil rights work; we don't have the benefit of time when it comes to our basic rights as human beings. If not us then who? Remember...as Audre Lord said, "Your silence will not protect you."

Joanna Dueñas is the chair of Equality Colorado's Board of Directors. She also directs the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The Equal Times is the quarterly newsletter of Equality Colorado. Equality Colorado is a non-profit statewide, grassroots lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equal rights advocacy organization. Equality Colorado's mission is to work to secure equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. We seek to create an environment where people are respected, open dialogue is encouraged and the truth is spoken about the diversity of our families and sexual identities. We work for social change and an understanding of the interrelationship between communities.

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email: equalityco@aol.com
website: http://www.tde.com/~equality

Yes! I want to support Equality Colorado's and Equality Lobby's work to secure equality for all....no exceptions.

Name_____ phone_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

❑ I am interested in Equality's Equity Fund sustainer giving program. Please send me information.

❑ I would like to make a donation of:
___$10 ___$25 ___$50 ___$75 ___$100 other $___

Checks should be made payable either to *Equality Colorado*, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to which contributions are tax-deductible or to *Equality Lobby*, a 501(c)(4) organization to which contributions are not tax-deductible, but certainly needed.
Return this form to:
Equality Colorado or Equality Lobby, PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203 (303) 839-5540

Anti-Violence Project

Michelle Drea, Director

Here's a rundown of what's been happening with Equality's newest program. We had a very successful rally, "Eliminate Hate." Sen. Gloria Tanner, Sen. Dorothy Rupert, and representatives from diverse communities spoke against hate violence and in support of SB 100, the bill which would add sexual orientation, age and physical and mental disability to the Colorado Ethnic Intimidations statute.

In a great victory, the bill passed out of the Senate. This is the first piece of proactive legislation from Equality Lobby which has passed a full chamber's vote. As of publication of the *Equal Times*, the bill was on the way to the House Appropriations Committee. If it passes, it's crucial that constituents contact their Representatives to voice their opinion about this crucial piece of legislation.

Over the first eight months of my tenure here, calls to the AVP hotline have consistently increased. We don't see this as a reflection of increased violence *per se*, but rather of the impact of our outreach to victims, law enforcement, and service providers.

Our most recent project was a collaboration on a police training video for the Aurora Police Dept. Working with Gateway Battered Women's Shelter, we scripted and recruited actors for the video. The video focuses on the unique issues around same-sex domestic violence. It will be required training material for all incoming officers in the Aurora PD.

AVP 24-HOUR CRISIS LINE NUMBER
(303) 852-5094

Upcoming Projects

- AVP will hold a diversity training for police officers at Denver's District 6.
- AVP will lead a "Stop workplace violence" training at the Lucent conference in Denver.
- There will be an AVP wine tasting fundraiser on May 14 at the Grand (see p. 1). Sometimes the seriousness of this work seems to preclude enjoyable events. This will allow people to support the AVP while having a heck of a good time.
- AVP has joined the coalition of groups working on a "Safe Schools" coalition.

Finally, a word on volunteers. In order for the Anti-Violence Project to be truly successful, we must have a strong base of volunteers.

We're thankful for the ones we have now -- but we need more. If you have the time to help us out, we need volunteers for the crisis line as well as in the office. Please call the office at (303) 839-5540 or email Michelle at ecmichelle@aol.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Colorado Marriage Rights Project

In June of 1996, the Colorado Marriage Rights Project sponsored a mass wedding. Over 50 couples participated in this event, along with their loved ones. The purpose was threefold: to provide a space for same-sex couples to celebrate their commitment to each other in front of their community; to continue to raise awareness about the need for equal marriage rights; and to raise money for Equality Colorado to continue the vital education around this and other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender justice issues. All of our goals were met and surpassed, so in 1997, we'll be doing it again!

JUNE WEDDING

Saturday, June 28th 1997

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

reception catered by Lifestyles Unlimited Catering

University of Denver § Park Hill Campus

Whatley Chapel § 19th & Oneida § Denver

Couples: $25 § Guests: $10

Get your registration packets beginning May 1 at any of the following locations:

Denver: The Book Garden & Category 6 Books
Boulder: Word is Out
Ft. Collins: A Quiet Corner
Colorado Springs: Ground Zero
Grand Junction: Crystal Books & Gifts

Also, take part in two informational sessions:
- Legal Issues for same-sex couples
- Fair Fighting for same-sex couples

Each will be offered once in June and once in July. Contact Equality for more details.

Cosponsored by the University of Denver GLBA

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(303) 777-0766

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Denver, Colorado 80209

Hours M-F 10:00 - 6:00
S. S. 11:00 - 5:00

HAVE YOU BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

CLIP

Colorado Legal Initiatives Project

PO Box 300397
Denver CO 80203-0397
(303) 830-2100 voice
(303) 830-0343 fax
CLIPundo2@aol.com email

The Legal Arm of the GLBT Community

"I acted and behold my life is joy."
– Ram Dass

Renée Bannerman, M.A.; LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor
Domestic Violence Certified
Psychotherapy for individuals / couples
Specializing in therapeutic services for women

1776 S. Jackson St., Suite 616
Denver, CO 80210

(303) 705-5459
by appointment

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1888 Sherman St. #640
Denver, CO 80203
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Stanford Law School Graduate
Wills ▼ Domestic Relations ▼ Criminal
Child Custody
Proud Member of Denver's Lesbian/Gay Community

COMING OUT IS A FAMILY AFFAIR!

If Someone You Care About is Gay

Maybe it's Time to COME OUT to Parents & Friends of Lesbians And Gays

Call 444-8164
Boulder PFLAG Chapter

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The Volunteer Page

by Anna Dennis

THANK YOU!

Anna wanted to say special thanks this issue to the "admin vols," or the administration volunteers. They come into our office regularly and are asked to do a variety of tasks. They really keep us going.

In no particular order, our great thanks go to: Anne, William, Elizabeth, Mary Ann, Sarah, Emily, Amanda, Becker, Andrew, and Kendra

Additionally, thanks to all who helped us out with our Channel 12 gay-night phone-a-thon: Marjorie, Jeannie, Peter, Dorothy, Vic, Amanda, Kendra, Karen, Rachel, Heather, and Sarah.

THANKS, FOLKS!

Finally, **T. Laden Crum** was an intern this winter on legislative issues. Without his help, our activist network and Lobby Day may never have materialized. Good luck in school, Big Daddy!

So You Wanna Get Involved?

HI! I'M ANNA DENNIS, THE VOLUNTEER coordinator at Equality Colorado. It's fantastic to be a part of this vital community organization. Equality Colorado can always utilize dedicated volunteers, who are willing to team up with our staff to work to secure equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Current volunteer opportunities include two upcoming special events (see below). There is particularly a need for Pepsi booth volunteers for the Capitol Hill People's Fair on June 7th and 8th. This is a great way for you to get involved with the community and have some fun at a fabulous outdoor event.

There are many ways we can put your talents to use at Equality Colorado. Even if you only have small amounts of time, I'd be happy to talk with you about what job might suit you. Volunteer activities usually fall in one of the following categories: Office Support, Mailings, Newsletter, Data Entry, Anti-Violence Project, Public Education & Action, Voices of Faith, Marriage Project, Fundraising, and Special Events.

If you would like to sign up for one or both of the special events, participate in other work at Equality Colorado, or need more information about volunteer opportunities, feel free to call Anna at (303) 839-5540 or email Equality Colorado at equalityco@aol.com.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON. Your volunteer help is greatly needed to help build stronger community. I'll sign off with some words that I find inspiring from George Bernard Shaw:

"I am of the opinion
that my life belongs
to the community,
and as long as I live,
it is my privilege
to do for it whatever I can.
I want to be thoroughly used up
when I die,
for the harder I work, the more I live.
Life is no 'brief candle' to me.
It is a sort of splendid torch
which I have got hold of for a moment,
and I want to make it burn
as brightly as possible
before handing it on
to future generations."

Public Education and Action Committee

EQUALITY COLORADO FORMED THE PUBLIC Education and Action Committee (PEAC) in order to match volunteers with research topics of importance to the community. Our projects have included:

- **"Value ALL Families,"** which featured a packet of information for people concerned about family issues, including adoption, child custody, domestic partnership, and other topics of concern to LGBT people in families. We also brought a photo display to Colorado and got buttons and bumper stickers.
- **"Get OUT the Vote,"** a voter education and mobilization project which featured posters, voter registration nights at bars, and another packet of information on the importance of voting.

OUR NEWEST PROJECT is one on **LIBRARIES:** How can our communities more effectively use these great resources? If this is a project you're interested in, contact Jonathan at Equality -- 303-3839-5540, ecjonathan@aol.com.

Wish List

Equality Colorado can always use help in our office -- including office supplies. If you have a source for the donation of any supply, let us know! Our immediate needs include:

- Apple laptop computer
- typewriter
- colored copy paper
- computer memory
- basic office supplies
- frequent flier miles for staff travel to conferences
- paper folding machine

Volunteer Opportunities

A Company Without Closets Conference
Equality Table
- Friday, May 2: shifts from 7am - 8pm
- Saturday May 3: shifts between 8am - 8pm

Capitol Hill People's Fair Pepsi Booth Sales
- Saturday, June 7: Shifts from 9:30 am -7:30 pm
- Sunday, June 8: Shifts from 9:30 am - 6:30 pm

Thursday Night is VOLUNTEER Night!
Those of you who can't come in during the day can still volunteer with us. Every Thursday evening from 6:00 - 9:00, we have dedicated volunteers working on a variety of projects. Join us! Call Anna at (303) 839-5540.

14th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization

the world's largest annual grassroots AIDS event

Illuminate the Truth:
May 4, 1997

BCAP
BOULDER COUNTY AIDS PROJECT
2118 14TH STREET
BOULDER, CO 80302
444-6121

OPEN HOUSE
7:00 pm till Dark
BCAP House
2118 14th Street

CANDLELIGHT WALK
At Dark
A silent walk through downtown Boulder to the AIDS Memorial Garden on Boulder Creek

AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL AND MOBILIZATION
Sunday, May 4, 1997

INTERFAITH AIDS COALITION OF BOULDER COUNTY WORSHIP SERVICE
6:00 - 7:00 pm
Karma Dzong
1345 Spruce Street

The purpose of this event is for many communities to simultaneously take action in support of people with AIDS. *HONOR EVERY DEATH. VALUE EVERY LIFE. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, DIGINTY AND LIFE.*

Bring your own candle and a paper cup to buffer against the wind. And please take this opportunity to involve your neighbors, churches and friends. Invite them to join you.

Music provided by Devotion

Equity Fund

THE EQUITY FUND, EQUALITY'S NEW DONOR PROGRAM, is off to a great start this year. Year to date, we have over 50 Equity Fund members and have raised over $30,000 for Equality Colorado's work for justice and equality for all. Part of the bonus of the Equity Fund is that the Gill Foundation is matching gifts *dollar for dollar.*

In a time when funding is increasingly scarce from foundation and corporate sources especially for "controversial issues" such as civil rights, we rely on individual donors to sustain our work. We appreciate your ongoing support and contributions.

The volunteer coordinating committee for the Equity Fund has hosted several successful kickoff parties and is planning many more throughout this first year. If you are interested in learning more about the Equity Fund or would like to host a kickoff party, please contact Sue Anderson at the office, 303-839-5540.

EQUITY FUND

EQUALITY COLORADO

Voices of Faith for Human Rights

A special insert of *The EQUAL Times*

Claiming the Spirit

Unique Conference becomes tradition

We are very excited about this year's conference July 24-26, 1997 at Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia , Denver. Dr. John McNeill, a former Jesuit priest and founder of Dignity in New York City will be our guest preacher for the opening worship on Thursday evening. Dr. McNeill was expelled from the Jesuits in 1987 for his views on gay and lesbian sexuality. He is a psychotherapist in New York City and has written "The Church and Homosexual", "Freedom, Glorious Freedom," "Taking a Chance on God"

The Friday evening presentation will be The Shower of Stoles Project. This project uses personal story and religious stoles as a powerful way to address the issue of GLBT people denied ordination rights by most Christian denominations. Thus far, the project has over 450 stoles representing GLBT people,either serving the church in the closet or those unable to serve because of the current discriminatory policies. We will be collecting stoles from the Denver area and dedicating them at the conference. If you want more information about making a stole, please contact Laurene at 839-5540.

On Saturday, we will hear from Mandy Carter, Field Organizer for Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum. The focus of Saturday will be on addressing race, gender and class issues within the GLBT communities.

Upcoming Events

To register or get more information on these events, call Laurene at (303) 839-5540 or email Eclaurene@aol.com.

Faith Communities responding to Same Sex Marriage

Thursday, May 8, 1997
8:30 am-12:00 pm
Suggested $10 donation
The whole issue of same sex marriage has been debated in the public arena, Colorado's State House, and the US Congress. This workshop will begin the conversation for clergy and laity within the faith communities. We will discuss theological and Biblical understandings of relationships and GLBT concerns.

Biblical Self-Defense and Liberation Workshop

Saturday, May 10, 1997
8:30 am -12:30 pm
Free will offering will be taken
We will examine the six scriptural references to same-sex behavior in light of their historic context and the issues they were addressing. The Bible does not condemn same-sex orientation nor same-sex relationships. We will also explore the presence of same-sex relationships and the liberating aspects found in the Bible.

CLOUT: Christian Lesbians Out United Together Rocky Mountain Chapter

This first organizing meeting of CLOUT-Rocky Mountain will take place on **Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m.** In 1991, CLOUT was formed to bring together Christian lesbians who want to have a positive witness about being women of faith.

Claiming the Spirit '97

July 24-26, 1997
Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church
1980 Dahlia St, Denver
Featuring Dr. Rev. John McNeill, Mandy Carter, The Shower of Stoles Project.

Conference Registration

Name_____

Address_____

City_____St___Zip_____

Phone_____

Fax_____

Email_____

Registration Fees: $50 before May 30th
$60 after June 1st
$35 one day- Fri/Sat

Individual needs (Please check any appropriate boxes. Requests must be received by June 1st.)
❑ Access assistance ❑ ASL Interpreter
❑ Vegetarian meals ❑ Braille
❑ Community Housing

Please make checks payable to Equality Colorado. Mail to "Claiming the Spirit"
PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203
303-839-5540 (phone) 303-839-1361 (fax)
email: equalityco@aol.com

Director's Cut by Sue Anderson

Equality Makes a Leap of Faith

OFTEN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT OUR WORK in faith communities at Equality Colorado, people's eyes start to glaze over and their faces go blank -- either that or they are vigorously nodding their heads in excitement. There seems to be little middle ground. I'm never entirely sure what that means. Maybe they are not quite sure why we do that work, what it means, or they feel a little uncomfortable with it. The truth though is this: we, as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and allies are indeed part of every faith community and seek to be included as full participants.

Too many gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people have become alienated from organized religion when they've been told things like "love the sinner, hate the sin" or "you'll be forgiven." Regardless of our personal experiences, most GLBT people and allies alike have felt the political backlash against us that often seems to be generated by people espousing a conservative Christian perspective. They are often people who want to claim the right to quote from the Bible and to monopolize the use of words such as morality, values and family.

It is for these reasons, that Equality Colorado has a commitment to working in faith communities through our Voices of Faith program. Whether it is about supporting people who have a commitment to a particular denomination and are also GLB or T or whether it is about challenging the political rhetoric that is coming from conservative sectors of every denomination, this work is critical. The conservative doctrine that often dominates the voice of the church does not speak for everyone. It is imperative that the voices of GLBT people of faith and our allies be heard in the continuing national dialogue about sexual orientation issues. We need to reclaim and rework the meaning that has of late been ascribed to morality, values and family.

THE ANNUAL *CLAIMING THE SPIRIT* CONFERENCE hosted by the Voices of Faith program is one of many ways that we continue to strive for dialogue and increased understanding about the needs and presence of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the church, temple or synagogue. The conference in the past two years has been a wonderful combination of dynamic keynote speakers, workshops and time for socializing, learning and networking.

Regardless of whether you can attend the annual conference this July or participate in one of the workshops put on by Voices of Faith Director, Rev. Laurene Lafontaine, think about how you can be involved in this work. Become a member of the VOF speaker's bureau, join the steering committee, take VOF information to your faith community, make sure that you are speaking out. Being gay should not have to mean abandoning your faith.

Voices of Faith for Human Rights

VOF RECEIVES A NUMBER OF CALLS INQUIRING about welcoming faith communities. We have compiled a list of congregations which are predominately GLBT and congregations that have made an official denominational statement which affirms and welcomes the full inclusion of GLBT persons. This list also includes those congregations whose clergy responded to a VOF letter recently sent to over 400 clergy and faith communities asking if they wanted to be listed as welcoming congregations for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, their families and friends. We are thankful for such a positive response and look forward to the day that all faith communities welcome all God's children. If your congregation is not listed and should be, please call Rev. Laurene Lafontaine at Equality 303-839-5540. We acknowledge that this list is still in process.

Worship times are on Sunday unless otherwise specified.

Supportive worship spots

Predominately GLBT congregations

MCC of the Rockies
303-860-1819
980 Clarkson, Denver
Worship at 8:55 & 10:55 am
Sign language interpreted at 10:55

Christ Chapel of the Rockies
303-831-7447
Independent/nondenominational/ charismatic
2267 Ogden, Denver
Thursday worship at 7 pm
Sunday worship at 10 am
Childcare provided

Dignity Denver (Catholic)
303-322-8485
1100 Fillmore St., Denver
Sunday Mass at 5 pm

Boulder MCC
303-861-5932
Worship at 6 pm
Meets at 2650 Table Mesa Dr, Boulder

Congregation Tikvat Shalom
303-331-2706
PO Box 6694, Denver, CO 80206
Please call for services

Pikes Peak MCC
Sunday Worship at 5 pm
Meets at All Soul's Unitarian Church
730 N. Tejon Dr., Colorado Springs
Childcare provided

Family in Christ MCC
970-221-0811
805 S. Shields, Fort Collins
Worship at 6 pm

MCC Pueblo
719-543-6460
Worship at 5 pm
Wednesday Spirituality group: 6:30 pm
Meets at Christ Congregational Church
Corner of Liberty and Bonforte, Pueblo

Open and Affirming - (UCC)

Park Hill Congregational Church (UCC)
303-322-9122
2600 Leyden, Denver
Worship at 10:30am
Adult education at 9:00am

Sixth Ave. UCC
303-377-0173
3250 E. 6th Ave., Denver
Worship at 8:45 and 10:30 am
Adult Education at 9:30 am
Children Education at 10:30 am
Childcare provided at 9:30/10:30

Wild Rose UCC
303-670-5987
PO Box 3633, Evergreen 80437
Worship at 10:30 am
Meets at Safehouse 3789 Ponderosa next to United Methodist Church of Evergreen

Washington Park United Church of Christ
303-777-5304
400 S. Williams St., Denver
Worship at 10:30 am
Child Care provided/ church school for children during the service.

Parkview Congregational Church
303-366-5224
12444 Parkview Dr., Aurora
Friday worship at 6 pm
Sunday worship at 10 am

First Congregational Church
303-442-1787
1128 Pine, Boulder
Worship at 9 am and 11 am
Adult education at 9 am
Childcare provided

Christ Congregational Church
719-544-0746
1003 Liberty, Pueblo
Worship at 10 am, Childcare provided

More Light - (Presbyterian)

Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church
303-333-9366
1100 Fillmore St., Denver
Worship at 9:30 am
Adult education at 11:00 am

Family of Christ Presbyterian Church
970-330-0301
2410 35th Ave, Greeley
Worship at 10:30 am
Adult education at 9:30 am

Christ Presbyterian Church
970-728-4536
434 W. Columbia St., Telluride
Worship at 10:00 am

Welcoming - (Unitarian)

1st Unitarian Church of Denver
303-831-7113
1400 Lafayette St., Denver
Worship at 10:30 am

1st Universalist Church
303-759-2770
4101 E. Hampden, Denver
Worship at 10:00 am

All Souls Unitarian Church
719-633-7717
730 N. Tejon, Colorado Springs
Worship at 10:30 am
Adult Forum at 9:15 am

Reconciling - (United Methodist)

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
303-832-4929
16th & Ogden, Denver
Worship at 10:30 am • Buddhist/Christian contemplative service at 5 pm

First United Methodist Church
303-442-3770
1421 Spruce, Boulder
Worship at 10:30 am
Adult Forum at 9:00 am
Childcare provided

Supportive Faith Communities

Berkeley United Methodist Church
303-421-3349
5200 W. 43rd, Denver
Contemporary Service at 9:15 am
Children's Sunday School at 9:15 am
Adult Education at 11:00 am

Cameron United Methodist Church
303-777-7638
1600 S. Pearl, Denver
Worship at 9 am
Childcare and children church school provided during the service

Congregation Emanuel
303-388-4013
51 Grape St, Denver
Worship on Friday at 8 pm
Saturday: Please call as the time varies

First Plymouth Congregational Church
303-762-0616
3500 S. Colorado Blvd, Denver
11:00 am worship

Grant Ave. United Methodist Church
303-733-1400
216 S. Grant Ave., Denver
Education at 9:00 am
Worship at 10:30 am
Childcare provided

Hearth Stone Community Church (Wiccan/pagan) 303-680-1741
Contact: Margaret Alia Denny
Gatherings: 7:30 pm night before the full moon

Highlands United Methodist Church
303-477-5857
3131 Osceola, Denver
Contemplative Service at 8:15 am
Sunday School at 9:30 am
Regular service at 11:00 am
Childcare provided

Montview Blvd Presbyterian Church
303-355-1651
1980 Dahlia St., Denver
Worship at 8:30 & 11 am
Education at 9:30 am
Childcare provided

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
303-831-7023
915 E. 9th Ave., Denver
Service of Prayer and Eucharist at 8:00 am
Learning Hour at 9:45 am
Worship at 10:00 am

Park Hill United Methodist
303-322-1867
5209 Montview Blvd., Denver
Worship: 9 and 11 am
Education: 10:00
Childcare provided

Salem United Church of Christ
303-759-4649
5300 E. Florida Ave., Denver
Worship at 9:30 am
Adult Bible Class: 8:30 am
Children Education: 9:30 am
Childcare provided

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
303-296-1712
2015 Glenarm St., Denver
Worship at 10 am

St. Barbanas Episcopal Church
303-388-6469
1280 Vine St., Denver
Service of Holy Eucharist at 7:45/9:30 am

St. Cecilia's Holy Orthodox Community
303-832-1420
Sunday: 10:00 am Liturgy (which includes the Eucharist) at 1160 Downing St. (private residence) in Denver.
Wednesday: 6:30 pm Liturgy (which includes the Eucharist) and Study of Orthodoxy or Bible Study after Liturgy at 950 Lafayette, #303 (private residence)

St. John's Cathedral (Episcopal)
303-831-7115
1313 Clarkson, Denver
Worship: 7:30, 8, 9 and 11:00 am
Education: 10:00 am
Childcare provided

University Park United Methodist Church
303-722-5736
2180 S. University Blvd., Denver
Worship: 9 and 10:30 am
Education: 9 am
Childcare provided

Arvada United Methodist Church
303-421-5135
6750 Carr St., Arvada
Worship: 7:45 am, 9:00 and 10:00 am
Education Hour: 9:00 and 10:30 am
Childcare provided at 9:00 and 10:30

Spirit of Joy Church of the Brethren
303-424-6261
Meets at Arvada Mennonite Church,
5927 Miller St., Arvada
Call for more information

Jewish Renewal Community of Boulder
Rabbi Tirzah Firestone
For information, call 303-271-3540

EQUALITY COLORADO

Perspectives on Faith by Rev. Laurene Lafontaine

Voices of faith for human rights

Who makes a family? A look at the Christian New Testament

In last issue's article on examples of family found in the Bible, we discovered there is a vast richness of expression about the diverse families in the Hebrew Scriptures. The same can be said for examples in the Christian scriptures --the New Testament. The whole of scripture is full of examples of family which go beyond the one man/one woman paradigm -- claimed as God's will by the traditionalists -- which is actually a 20th Century creation.

Beginning with Jesus, family is expressed in a variety of formations. Jesus, himself, is thought to have been single for there is no mention of a spouse. The cultural expectation during Jesus' time was that men and women were to marry and to have children. Jesus instead chose to expand the notion of family by developing a family of followers, a family of choice, if you will. Even when Jesus is told that his mother and his brothers were outside, calling to him, he responds, "Who is my mother and my brothers? Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31-35) This is not just a theological statement about the larger family of God. His ministry and life fully embodied this notion of family. The disciples and followers spent three years of their lives with Jesus and the rest being Christian community together.

Denominations have chosen to understand Jesus's position against divorce as one which was culturally biased and have made theological shifts to full acceptance and participation of divorced persons, including ordination rights.

Jesus, of course, had his close friends: James, Peter and the beloved disciple John. It was John to whom Jesus gave his own mother as he was dying on the cross. John took Jesus' mother as his own. (John 19:26-27) There are many questions about the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the beloved disciple. There is much speculation about Jesus and his sexuality. Much of Christian tradition have treated Jesus as if he was asexual. Yet if indeed Jesus was fully human, he experienced sexual feelings for that is a part of what it means to be human. There is much mystery regarding Jesus.

Peter had a commuter marriage. We read references to Peter's mother-in-law and wife. In the Gospel accounts, we hear nothing that suggests that Peter brought his family along for the many travels with Jesus. Which begs the practical question, How did Peter provide for his family? The notion of leaving one's family to follow Christ is lifted up as a faith commitment by Jesus. I'm not sure how our friends on the more conservative side would respond to men leaving their families.... Unfortunately, this is a current problem which many single mothers are struggling with -- the often painful reality of raising a family by themselves on one income.

Mary and Martha are a prime example of women living beyond the perceived boundaries of the role of women. In Luke 10:38, we read that Jesus went to Martha's home. Two single women living in the same house. Women didn't own property let alone have any rights within that society. Yet, Martha and Mary share a home with their brother, Lazarus. I often wonder why the gospel account doesn't refer to their home as Lazarus's home.

So, we have two sisters and a brother living in the same household. Rev. Nancy Wilson of MCC Los Angeles suggests that two women living together were often referred to as sisters even if they were not related. There has been some speculation about Mary and Martha being lesbians. Again, this is speculation. But who is to say that is not the case? Reading scripture is an interpretative act of faith.

In Matthew 8:5-13, Jesus heals the slaveboy of the Roman centurion. There is scholarly evidence that this relationship was an intimate gay relationship. The centurion acknowledges his perceived understanding of religious traditions by uttering his unworthiness to Jesus, yet Jesus responds to declaring that this young man is healed by his faith. There is plenty of opportunity for Jesus to make a statement regarding the nature of their relationship, yet he does not. Jesus affirms the centurion's strong faith and then heals his slave.

After Jesus' resurrection, he met two disciples who were walking to Emanus. Cleopas and his male sojourner had a lengthy conversation with Jesus. As they reached Emanus, they urged Jesus to stay with them, which he did, and they shared a meal together. Again, the story begs the question about who these men were and what was the nature of their relationship.

The most frequent claim of anti-GLBT rhetoric is that Jesus never affirmed same-sex couples. There is sufficient evidence to challenge that claim. The reality of Mary and Martha being a lesbian couple is very possible. The affirmative action of the Roman centurion's request for his slave is granted. No condemnation. Jesus shares a meal with Cleopas and his traveling companion who shared a home together. These references all continue to challenge the rhetoric that there are no gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people within the Bible.

Jesus spoke about heterosexual couples, particularly addressing the issue of divorce in Matthew 19:5. He was clearly against divorce. Yet most denominations have chosen to understand his position as one which was culturally biased and have appropriately made theological shifts to full acceptance and participation of divorced persons, including ordination rights. The irony is that many of those denominations continue to deny GLBT persons the

continued on page V4

Bibliography

Boswell, John. *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Comstock, Gary *Gay Theology Without Apology.* Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1993.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. *Sensuous Spirituality: Out from Fundamentalism.* New York: Crossroad, 1993.

Wilson, Nancy. *Our Tribe: Queer Folks, God, Jesus and the Bible.* San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995.

Supportive worship spots, cont.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boulder
303-443-3912
PO Box 3153, Boulder
Worship 10:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder
303-494-0195
5001 Pennsylvania, Boulder
Worship at 10:30 am

United Church of Broomfield
303-466-8355
825 Kohl St., Broomfield
Worship at 10:30 am
Education Hour: 9:15 am
Childcare provided

First Presbyterian Church of Englewood
303-761-8882
3500 S. Logan St., Englewood
Worship: 10:30 am
Education: 9 am (children and adults)
Childcare provided

Calvary United Methodist
719-599-7250
4210 Austin Bluffs Pkwy, Colorado Springs
Worship: Traditional: 8 am, Contemporary 9:30 am, Blended 11 am
Education: Adults and Children 9:45 am
Adults, youth and children's church 11 am

St. Laurence's Episcopal Church
303-838-2457
26812 Barkley Rd., Conifer
Worship at 8 and 10:15 am

Plymouth Congregational Church
970-482-9212
916 W. Prospect Rd., Fort Collins
Worship at 8:30 and 10:45 am
Education: 9:30 am
Childcare provided

Jefferson Unitarian Church
303-279-5282
14350 W. 32nd Ave., Golden
Worship at 9:00 and 11:00 am

High Country Community Church
303-683-9940 • Littleton
Meets at Arapahoe Community College, in the Half moon Room at 10 am.

Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church
303-972-1716
8050 W. Coal Mine Ave., Littleton
Worship at 9:00 and 11:00 am

St. Philip Lutheran Church
303-979-4491
7531 S. Kendall Blvd., Littleton
Worship: 8:00 and 10:45 am
Summer Hours: 8:00 and 9:30 am
Education: 9:15 am
Childcare provided

Hilltop United Church of Christ
303-841-2808
10926 E. Democrat Rd., Parker
Worship: 9:30 am, Education: 9:30 am
Childcare provided

St. John's UCC
970-356-8803
3815 W. 20th St., Greeley
Worship at 10:30 am, Education: 9:00 am
Childcare provided

Lakewood United Church in Christ,
303-233-4401
100 Carr St, Lakewood
Educational hour at 9:00
Worship at 10:15
Childcare provided

Mile High Church of Religious Science
303-237-8851
9079 W. Alameda, Lakewood
Sunday worship: 8:30, 10, and 11 am
Wed worship: 7pm
Childcare provided

Who Makes a Family?

continued from page V3

same acceptance, participation and ordination rights based on Biblical interpretation and theology.

Throughout the rest of the New Testament, there are many other examples of diverse family expressions. In Acts 4:32, we're told that the Christian community shared everything together -- all their resources -- and lived together in a commune setting which was very much an extended family atmosphere. Later in Acts, we read about Priscilla and Aquilla who were partners in ministry, both traveling with Paul, team teaching the new found faith and tentmakers by trade. (Acts 18:2-3, 18, 26) This relationship provided a new expression of a heterosexual couple having dual careers.

Eunuchs have a very special place in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Eunuchs are an example of transgender people in the Bible. In Acts 8:26-40, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by the apostle Philip. Again, no comments regarding who he was. Transgender people are referred to throughout as blessed. In future VOF columns, transgender concerns and the Bible will be more fully developed.

In Acts 16:11-15, we read about Lydia, the first European Christian who came to faith and then had her whole household baptized by Paul. She was a businesswoman by trade, a seller of purple cloth. Paul stays in her home. There is no talk of a husband. Again, given the culture, Lydia is another expression of who makes a family.

Paul had an apparent conflict within himself about being single and the nature of passion. There is much scholarship that recognizes Paul's own struggle with his sexuality and relationships.

The Apostle Paul, in one of his discussions about marriage (I Corinthians 7), stated that if a man cannot control his passion, it is better to marry. Yet he tells his readers it is better to remain unmarried as he was. During this discussion, Paul does not make a strong case for marriage beyond one's need for marriage if one lacks control of one's passion. Paul in this chapter tells his readers not to divorce, and if women are divorced, she cannot remarry unless she returns to her divorced husband.

Paul had an apparent conflict within himself about being single and the nature of passion. There is some scholarship that suggests that Paul is working out many of his own issues regarding relationships. He spent his life traveling with predominately men. There were no specifically significant women in his life. There is much scholarship that recognizes Paul's own struggle with his sexuality and relationships.

Voices of faith for human rights

These are a number of examples of a diverse understanding about family found in the Bible. So when people suggest that God intended only a family between a man and woman, there is much Biblical evidence which supports a broader understanding. Who makes a family? Two loving adults who love each other and care for each other. Love makes a family.

I'm deeply indebted to the work of Dr. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, author of Sensuous Spirituality *and the appendix on family and Rev. Nancy Wilson, author of* Our Tribe: Queer Folks, the Bible and Jesus.

Robert P. Borquez
Attorney at Law

837 SHERMAN STREET
DENVER, CO 80203

TELEPHONE (303) 837-8525

Guest Spotlight Rev. Gil Horn

This letter appeared in the Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church's newsletter. Rev. Gil Horn, one of Montview's co-pastors, articulates some important connections between the recent passage of Amendment B, the so-called "Fidelity and Chastity" Amendment which codifies the exclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members from ordination for church office by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the mass suicide in San Diego.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

There is a dimension to the cultic suicide in California I do not want us to miss. Marshall Applewhite grew up in a Presbyterian manse, a child of the church. I do not know how it happened, but he found no acceptance there for who he was. He probably tried very hard to please his family. He even went to seminary. But he found no sanctuary in the church for a young person struggling with sexuality.

We know some of what happened next. He finally acknowledged that he was homosexual, and decided to reject his maleness altogether. His brutal reaction to that inescapable part of himself reflected the rejection he had experienced growing up. It was not acceptable for Christians to be homosexual. Period.

Our church is in the process of ratifying a change in our constitution which intends, its designers say, to bar anyone who does not practice "fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness" from holding church office. We've spent a lot of political energy on this amendment. Your session opposed it and said so. But once the dust settles, I am concerned that we shall have created a huge pastoral problem for the Presbyterian Church.

Whether you believe God made us the way we are or not, we are all in the process of discovering who that is our whole life long. And if our church is sending the message that only certain categories of people are fit for leadership, I believe that will have a devastating effect on our life together. Think about it. Shall our nominating committee members ask questions of potential officers about fidelity and chastity? Are our children and youth, all of whom are still figuring out sexuality, going to feel accepted and affirmed in such an atmosphere? Won't those who have already written the church off as rigid and judgmental now find their worst suspicions confirmed?

These are pastoral concerns which, if I read the gospels right, were foremost with Jesus. I don't have a political way out of the corner into which we seem to be painting ourselves that will satisfy anybody, including me. But I am not going to let this decision compromise our capacity to embrace all those God send us here at Montview. I guess we'll just have to work out together the "terms of embracement," won't we?

Grace and peace,

Gilbert J. Horn,
co-pastor

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you need a cool PLACE
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Manny Mendez
759-6654
The Uptown Partnership
1648 Washington Street
Denver, CO 80203
RE/MAX CENTRAL, INC 1873 S. BELLAIRE ST. 700 DENVER, CO 80222
757-7474

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Level II: Sunday, May 4, 9:00-4:00 (Estes Park)

Spend a weekend in the mountains nurturing your relationship!

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Out and About: News and Action

WHAT'S UP WITH CHRYSLER?

Over the past months, Chrysler Corporation's name has popped up quite a few times in relation to issues around gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. And never in a positive way. To wit:

• *Esquire* Magazine's literary editor Will Blythe quit the publication in protest after claiming that a gay-themed story was pulled from the magazine for fear that CHRYSLER, a major *Esquire* advertiser, would be offended by the work. David Leavitt's fictional story, "The Term Paper Artist," contains homoerotic scenes set in a Jeep, which is manufactured by Chrysler. Both Chrysler and *Esquire* Executive Editor Edward Kosner deny that the auto maker had any involvement in the decision to pull the story, which Kosner claims "was going to offend many, many people" because of its sexual themes.

• CHRYSLER, a season-long sponsor of the TV show *Ellen*, is one of the few companies that has decided against advertising in the April 30 "coming out" episode. Chrysler denies that pressure from the far right influenced their decision. "We're not making a social statement" about sexual orientation says Chrysler spokesperson Megan Giles. "But it's not sound business for us to be involved with an episode that's in such a highly polarized and emotional environment." Sponsorship beyond April 30 will depend on "whether the media and public hype recedes."

• After months of pressure because of documented cases of anti-gay harassment, CHRYSLER Corporation has included "sexual orientation" in the "forbidden forms of harassment" section of their corporate Code of Conduct. However, the revised code has not been posted at any plant, and the code is not part of any employee contract. The diversity training which was promised "ASAP" appears to be on the back burner.

ACTION: Write to Chrysler's CEO and tell him you're concerned about the anti-gay pattern of events attributed to Chrysler. Write to: Bob Eaton, CEO of Chrysler Corporation, 800 Chrysler Drive, Auburn Hills, MI 48371. Also, visit the web site of the **Campaign for Equal Rights at Chrysler** at www.critpath.org/chrysler-campaign/

CORPORATIONS UNDER ATTACK

Disney, ABC, Bank of America, and countless other organizations are under attack by the radical right for company policies which do not meet religious political extremists' ideal for anti-gayness. In the case of American Airlines, the right has gone quite far.

An unusual joint letter was released to the media from the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, American Family Association, and Coral Ridge Ministries. The letter calls for followers to call American and complain about "American's sponsorship of homosexual 'pride' events" in the words of Concerned Women chair Beverly LaHaye. According to the letter, the airline has "gone beyond mere tolerance" for gays and lesbians. Naturally, American's switchboard and e-mails are being bombarded now by homophobic and hateful callers who have been urged by LaHaye and others to demand the company terminate its gay-friendly policies.

American Airlines is in truth a major sponsor to and supporter of scores of community-based groups representing GLBT people. It is also the first airline to adopt a written non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation in its employment practices, and it is well represented by the leadership of its gay and lesbian employee group, GLEAM. For these pioneering efforts, and its marketing and sales outreach to the gay and lesbian traveler, American has become the next bulls-eye for hard-hitting, anti-gay corporate attacks.

We need to send our messages of support and encouragement. Especially if you especially are a frequent flyer on American, or have recently used American as your carrier, make a note. It is important to counter-act the impression that we are silent and unconcerned when the vicious attacks are unleashed.

ACTION: E-Mail to this address: Webmaster@amrcorp.com or Call personally to the American switchboard in Dallas at 817-963-1234, then hit "0" and request the operator to send your caller comment to their executive offices. You should be able to reach an individual to whom you may register your views.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

NORTH DAKOTA CAN CONFINE THOSE SUSPECTED OF HAVING HIV

The Governor of North Dakota recently signed into law a bill making it the first state to legalize the confinement of people suspected of having HIV. According to the law, emergency personnel, including police officers, firefighters, patients, health care workers and others may secure a court order confining individuals to whose blood they have been "significantly" exposed. Persons may be confined for up to five days and no criminal charges need be filed to be imprisoned.

"This is one of the most chilling and dangerous laws enacted this year," said Kerry Lobel, NGLTF executive director. "It flies in the face of accepted medical and public health policy regarding HIV. This law will do more harm than good for the people of North Dakota."

Critics of the new law say the fact that HIV tests of others does not determine one's own HIV status seems to have been lost on North Dakota law makers and the governor. The law goes into effect July 1. For more information, contact Keith Elston of the ACLU of the Dakotas at 701-255-4727.

NGLTF

UPDATE ON HAWAII MARRIAGE VOTES

On April 19, a Hawaiian legislative conference agreed to let voters decide on a constitutional amendment which would give the legislature the right to restrict marriage to heterosexual couples. At the same time, the conference committee decided to extend some 50 state marital rights and benefits to couples who register as reciprocal beneficiaries, a category open to any two people who cannot legally wed.

The proposed amendment would not *require* the legislature to ban same-sex marriages, however. So even if the amendment passes in 1998, the legislature would not be able to enact such a restriction on marriage before 1999. Legal experts expect the *Baehr v. Miike* case to have been completed by that time.

The full legislature must still approve the amendment in order for it to make the ballot. The benefits package would go into effect in July of this year.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Religion and politics can be a great mix -- and an explosive one

continued from page 1

TOO OFTEN, HOWEVER, PROGRESSIVES and moderates, fearful of the might and rhetoric of the religious political extremists (RPEs), make the mistake of wishing conservative Christians "out of politics" altogether. The logic behind this wish is that, given that such people are driven by a religious perspective, then their involvement in politics is a violation of "church and state." But that wish is a dangerous one.

First, the Religious Right does not by any means speak for all religious folks. They would like us to believe that the Biblical mandates they refer to have only one interpretation, but even within their religious communities there is much debate over some major tenets -- including the "last days," the nature of Jesus's divinity, and the place of those people of faith who do not ascribe to their narrow interpretations. There are many clergy and other people with strong religious convictions who are vital to our movement towards justice. Their religious background and faith are great assets to the community.

Second, the wall of separation between church and state is put in place, in part, to ensure that all people of faith can participate in the political process. We must encourage people of all faith perspectives to come to the table, and we must be careful not to seize upon their religious motivations as inherently flawed.

Our concern must be *what* the RPEs say rather than *why* they say it. Churches should be able to lobby for their interests, within the dictates of their tax status. It's when their ideals interfere with others' rights and freedoms and seek to silence others' perspectives, then trouble arises. For GLBT people, non-Christians, and women especially, we must be vigilant about what is being said and the dangers that lie therein.

We must encourage people of all faith perspectives to come to the political table.

Radical Right leaders' speeches and fundraising letters are rife with calls for the breakdown of the wall of separation between church & state in the US. This takes many forms:

- attempts to frame religious ideas as "our nation's heritage;"
- reference to Biblical texts about "Christian Dominion;"
- attacks on the ban on state-sponsored prayer as "religious intolerance;"
- a call for public funding of religious charities and schools.

Simply put, the bottom-line goal of many of the religious right's most powerful leaders is a theocratic state, one in which a narrow interpretation of Biblical law and morality replaces the Constitutional provisions set in place to preserve a free and religiously plural society: In the United States, every law must have *some* secular purpose. If it were up to the RPEs, the sole rationale for a law could be their interpretation of Scripture without the judicial review which insists on every law having non-religious merit.

The irony is that the very church-state wall they fight against was put into place for their benefit. Every religion in this country is a minority religion. Threats to the church-state separation are really threats to each religion.

The greater irony is that in the case of gay rights, the laws they fight against serve *them* as well. Some people would like nothing better than to fire or assault someone because of their religion -- but current laws speak against that. People of different faiths are allowed to marry each other, even if no clergymember will perform the ceremony. The right to privacy and freedom of association also protect people of faith from religious persecution.

Politics without morality -- whether religiously derived or not -- is an oxymoron. But "morality" without freedom is a real threat. Even the RPEs should agree to that.

Endnotes

[1] Fundraising letter, Christian Action Network, March, 1997.
[2] Burtoft, Larry, *The Social Significance of Homosexuality*, Focus on the Family, 1994, p. 78.

Legislature '97

EQUALITY LOBBY

UPDATE -- Bill Summary as of 4/22/97

BILL #	SUBJECT	STATUS	SUMMARY
Positive Bills			
HB 1266	Employment Non-discrimination	died in committee	*See Rep. Leyba's article on p. 1*
HB 1289	Needle Exchange	died on House floor	*First year introduced, disappointing loss*
SB 100	Hate Crimes	passed Sen. & 1st House comm.	*Has gone farther every year*
SB 161	"Domestic Partnership" created	died in committee	*Fostered important discussion of rights*
Negative Bills			
HB 1198	Anti Same-sex Marriage	passed 2 houses, sent to conference committee	*Was vetoed last year, may be signed this yr.*
HB 1299	Anti Affirmative Action	died in committee	*May be on ballot in 1998*
SB 209	Bans Domestic Partnerships for State Colleges	died on Senate floor	*Part of backlash against DP gains*

If you'd like to be part of our Activist Network, call, write or email us TODAY!

Employment Discrimination

continued from page 1

senators also need to hear from **you**, their voters. Be sure you know who represents you in the State House, and contact them. Speak up and speak from your heart. Take advantage of each opportunity, not just the legislative session, to discuss civil rights protections with your elected officials. Dispel the myths and stereotypes that our well-funded opponents are working overtime to promote.

Building support for our legislative quest also requires expanded coalitions. Now is the time for us to determine who our other allies are, how they can contribute and who they can influence. Let's get them to the table as active partners, sharing in this struggle and ultimately in our victory.

Overall, I feel optimistic about re-introducing this bill. It is one of my top priorities, because there is such a compelling need for people in much of the state, especially for those working outside of Denver, Boulder, Aspen, Telluride and Crested Butte, the five communities providing protection from anti-gay and lesbian discrimination. I think everyone involved learned a great deal about what it takes to succeed at this level.

TALKING POINTS: Civil Rights Legislation

- Gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals do face unequal treatment in employment, when they are openly gay or are suspected of being gay. This interferes with a person's ability to be a productive member of his or her community.
- Those who are discriminated against unjustly need to be able to have a remedy. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people currently have no recourse for discrimination in 41 states, including Colorado.
- Five years ago, the far right misled Coloradans into believing that gay people are looking for something other than equal treatment. But their idea of "special rights" was rejected by the US Supreme Court in the Amendment 2 decision. But winning Amendment 2 only put us back at square one.
- In February 1994, a *Newsweek* poll found that 74 percent of all Americans favored protecting gays from job discrimination.
- The Legal Activities law, also known as the "Smokers' Rights Law," protects people from getting fired because of legal activities they engage in outside the workplace. A Colorado lawyer won a discrimination suit based on this law. However, the law is not the solution for anti-gay discrimination in the workplace. First, it only covers *termination* and not other forms of discrimination such as non-promotion and the creation of a hostile environment. Second, unlike discrimination cases handled by the Colorado Civil Rights Office, the Legal Activities law does not provide for mediation or any help from the Commission, so victims must sue at their own expense.

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Legislative Planning Days

This year, Equality Lobby will expand our pre-session outreach and organizing strategies. There will be **six** Legislative Planning Days throughout the summer. Take this opportunity to help strategize about grassroots organizing, learn secrets of the legislative process, and provide feedback to lobbyists, legislators, and Equality staff.

Legislative Planning Days will happen in:

Grand Junction • Vail • Durango
Pueblo • Denver • Loveland

Call Equality Colorado at 303-839-5540 or email equalityco@aol.com to learn more about **Legislative Planning Days**.

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Around the State NoCo Edition

Second Mondays

Weld County lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and supportive community members are welcome to this ongoing community discussion on improving the situation for queers in Greeley. Meetings are the second Monday of every month. Call GGLBA at 970/351-1484 or Equality Colorado at 303/839-5540 for more information.

Greeley gets involved.

Estes Park PFLAG

Colorado's newest PFLAG chapter had its first meeting in March. Organizers are excited about the possibilities that an organized group presents for support, discussion, and community. Meetings are the second Thursday of every month at the Community Church of the Rockies. For more information, call Bob & Reenie Baker at (970) 586-0941.

Ft. Collins

Ft. Collins today is a great example of a community coming together to create positive change. Activists with Equality Colorado, PFLAG, Lambda Community Center, Metropolitan Community Church, and several other organizations are working with other Ft. Collins communities to try to assure passage of a new, revised Human Rights Ordinance that would, among other things, finally protect GLBT people from discrimination.

The Northeast part of Colorado is diverse in many ways. Its economy includes agriculture, high-tech, tourism, prisons and manufacturing. Two of Colorado's largest universities make their home in the region. It is certainly one of the most happening places for GLBT community organizing.

Directory of GLBT Organizations in Northern Colorado

Ft. Collins: Along with more conservative Loveland to the South, Ft. Collins has one of the larger GLBT communities in the state. Many social networks. In 1988, the city of Ft. Collins narrowly defeated a vote which would have added "sexual orientation" to the city's human rights ordinance. The issue is again before the City Council. Ft. Collins has two gay bars and is home to Colorado State University.

Lambda Community Center: 1437 E. Mulberry, Ste. #1 • Ft. Collins, CO 80524 • (970) 221-3247
SOGLB at CSU: Lory Student Center Box 206 • Ft. Collins, CO 80523 • (970) 491-7232
Straight But Not Narrow at CSU: PO Box 708 LSC • Ft. Collins, CO 80523 • (970) 407-0730
Rainbow Chorus: 111 E. Drake #7101 • Ft. Collins, CO 80525 • (970) 495-3434
A Quiet Corner: 803 E. Mulberry • Ft. Collins, CO 80524 • (970) 416-1916
Metropolitan Community Church Family in Christ: 805 S. Shields St. • Ft. Collins, CO 80521 • (970) 221-0811

Greeley: A good-sized, conservative city. Strong progressive allies, especially at the University of Northern Colorado and among clergy.

Greeley Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance: 2005 Univ. Center, Office D • Greeley, CO 80639 • (970) 351-1484

Estes Park: Very large lesbian population for its size, famous potlucks. Very popular summer resort.
PFLAG Estes Park -- Bob & Reenie Baker • (970) 586-0941

Northeast Plains: Includes Ft. Morgan, Brush, Sterling, and many smaller towns. Northeastern Junior College is in Sterling. Morgan, Logan, and surrounding counties are rural and conservative, but there is a growing network of glbt and supportive people in this area. There have been two recent potlucks, and initial plans are to start a PFLAG chapter for the region. For information on how to connect with this network, contact Equality Colorado.

High Plains PFLAG?

Though still in the incipient stages, concerned community members in Morgan, Logan, and surrounding counties are interested in beginning a PFLAG chapter. They are especially interested in finding more parents & allies who live in the region. If you know anyone who might be interested in this, contact Jonathan at Equality Colorado.

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Field Notes

by Jonathan Kelley

"Real" Grassroots: Potlucking on the Plains

The town of Brush is only 90 minutes from Denver (thanks to the 75 mph speed limit) to the Northeast, but it's a world away. Still, its proximity to the Front Range made me wonder whether if I were to stand on top of one of the silos and face west, I'd be able to see the mountains. I didn't try.

When I told my colleagues I was going to a queer potluck in Brush (on a Saturday night!), they were somewhat incredulous. "Jonathan, you need to get a life," they said. "Well," I responded, "that's beside the point." Because I was excited about the excursion.

I had been up to Morgan County once before -- the previous month -- to see what, if anything, gay life was like up there. I asked everyone I could think of for names of Plains folks, made some phone calls, and asked those whom I got ahold of if they knew anyone else. Then I drove east from Greeley and proceeded to meet some gay people in Ft. Morgan, Brush, and even farther northeast in Sterling.

Now rural organizing does not come naturally to a city boy like me. But as I travel around the state, it has become clear that it's a huge priority for a statewide organization to work and be visible in the "sticks." Those places where there are absolutely no services available, no advocacy organizations, no gay social network: Amendment 2 did exceedingly well in such counties. Folks there assume that either there are no gay or lesbian people in their towns, or that we are simply sinners/predators/stereotypes. Marilyn Musgrave, sponsor of two anti-gay bills in two legislative sessions, is from Morgan County. And this is one of the more progressive counties in Eastern Colorado.

So all I could think of during the drive up was that this was "real grassroots" I was doing. I was feeling pretty smug -- hell, I was going to introduce gay politics to rural Colorado!

Or maybe not.

The people at the potluck were already pretty political. They were more aware of the legislative process, of who their elected officials were, and what resources, if any, were available to them, than their "city cousins." Perhaps this was because people in small towns pay more attention to these things, or perhaps it's because they felt less protected and like they had more at stake.

It may sound trite, but I realized that Brush, Colorado, was no more and no less "grassroots" than Capitol Hill, Boulder, or Aspen. The circumstances may be different -- passing a local non-discrimination ordinance is not on the Brush radar screen -- but the work really isn't.

So what is it that my organization should provide rural communities? Because of our resources, Equality is able to provide a forum for people getting together; we can bring programs, educational materials, and other resources to people across the state; we can help build bridges across county and regional lines; and we can share ideas about becoming more politically active and work for change that will effect *everyone* in the state.

And of course, we can learn. I'm not doing heroic work in rural Colorado after all, but that's okay. Just doing my job has given me the opportunity to meet some fantastic people. The best part is that just about *everyone* who's gay in town comes to the Morgan potlucks; so unlike Denver, where I'm most likely to meet only the "politicized" queers, there I get a truer sense about the true range of our community.

Gays and lesbians in Morgan County are a tremendous asset to Equality Colorado. I just hope they stick it out.

Notable Quotables

"Am I the only parent who feels that the straight cruise-ship commercials starring Kathie Lee Gifford are more of a threat to my kids' view of heterosexuality than anything a gay sponsor could present?"

New York Times columnist Frank Rich on ABC's refusal to air an ad for Olivia Cruise Lines during *Ellen*'s "coming out" episode

"This law could result in you being ordered *by your government* to open your business to ... open your home to ... send your child off to be cared for by ... someone whose lifestyle you find morally repulsive."

Will Perkins, in a fundraising letter for Colorado for Family Values, on Gloria Leyba's Employment Non-Discrimination Bill

"Bank of America's announcement that unmarried heterosexual 'partners' and homosexual 'partners' will receive family benefits shows that the bank has joined forces with those trying to destroy marriage as the core institution of civilization."

Family Research Council Director of Cultural Studies Robert Knight

"We are about one thing: the Constitution of the United States. I hope that our neighbors and our friends and our co-workers like us, but if they don't, then let us be quite clear...their discomfort is not reason to deny us freedom under the Constitution."

David Mixner at a Greenville, SC gay pride rally

"It's ridiculous to blame gays and lesbians for heterosexual dysfunction."

Evangelical Jim Wallis, founder of Call to Renewal, at a meeting of conservative religious activists in Colorado Springs.

"A TV station in Alabama is refusing to air the coming-out episode of *Ellen*. A spokesman...said, 'Homosexuality is not a topic that two cousins should watch with their children.'"

Conan O'Brien

"Man is to subdue the earth and have dominion over all its creatures. This is called 'The Cultural Mandate' because it deals with all culture as we know it. As God's junior partners we are to rule over the earth in His name."

D. James Kennedy, pastor at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and key leader within the radical right, as quoted in *The Freedom Writer*

"It is very important to note that the capital punishment prescribed in [*Leviticus 18:22*] was valid only within the context of the theocratic character of the nation of Israel. It is an interpretive, not to mention ethical, abuse of this passage to apply it directly to a modern democratic polity."

Focus on the Family (in the same book in which they call for an anti-gay public policy), picking & choosing what part of the Bible should be put in cultural context

"Though they don't say this on Sesame Street, a lesbian is a person in your neighborhood."

Jacquelyn Mitchard, author of *The Deep End of the Ocean*, about *Ellen*, in *Time*

"It shouldn't matter who you are. It's discrimination -- it's a very subtle form of discrimination."

Sen. Dick Mutzebaugh, R-Highlands Ranch, arguing against (!) the Hate Crimes bill. Mutzebaugh voted for the anti-marriage bill, the anti-domestic partnership bill, and against Hate Crimes and Domestic Partner Rights bills.

"My word of choice is really 'butch' as in 'This is my butch.' That just about sums it up."

Lesbian author Leslea Newman on what she calls her significant other

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